

Persia

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Think in this batter'd Caravanserai,
Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day.
How Sultán after Sultán with his Pomp
Abode his destined Hour, and went his way.

Fitzgerald, the best interpreter of Khayyam

co-operate but in a clash one cannot predict which would prevail. In conclusion, it must not be forgotten that the *mullahs* are ordinary Persians who have studied religion, hence they reflect the mores of the people from whom they came. It is common to hear the Westernized Persians blame the *mullahs* for all of modern Iran's ills and *vice versa*. Both groups are Persian and represent their country.

To see how the *mullahs* became powerful we turn to the beginning of the modern history of Iran, the rise of the Safavid dynasty and the state-'church' union.

CHAPTER VI

Half the World is Isfahan

RUGS, cats and Shah 'Abbas are the symbols of Safavid Iran where a certain finesse dominates the arts and crafts and indeed life in general. Under the Safavids the disruptive forces of the preceding centuries of Mongolian and Turkish rule were subdued and welded into the new structure which we may call modern Iran, at least in comparison to the millennia of history which the land had already known. We have already mentioned the legacy of Turkish and Mongolian offices and influences in Safavid Iran. The early history of the state from 1524 to about 1560 was occupied with civil wars between various Turkish Qizilbash tribes, each seeking to dominate Shah Tahmasp, successor of Isma'il the founder. The power of the Qizilbash was broken by the introduction of Georgian and Circassian units into the Safavid army in the last years of Tahmasp.

One may profitably draw a parallel between the formation of the Safavid state and that of the Ottoman empire. The co-existence of a religious and a political institution in both, and the forging of a new allegiance and a new government in both, are striking. Both empires, if they may be so called, arose from Turkish military states, but the élite corps of each army came to be based in great part on non-Turkish, even mostly Christian, professional guards, the Janissaries in the Ottoman Empire and the Georgians in the Safavid realm. In both states the governmental bureaucracy operated side by side with a church organization. In the Ottoman empire the Shaykh al-Islam in Istanbul performed 'spiritual' functions on behalf

of the caliph-sultan, while under him was a kind of hierarchy of *muftis* 'judges', *khwajas* 'teachers' (Turkish *hoca*) and others. In the Safavid empire by the time of Shah 'Abbas the original missionary zeal, or one might better say the inquisition, was over since Shiism had become dominant and was the religion of the state. Consequently the early religious figure called the *sadr* whose primary task was to impose doctrinal unity, and to root out heresy, had given way to the *mujtahid* who was more concerned with learning, though in a medieval, scholastic manner. With the establishment of a Shiite state, learned men of this persuasion from all over the Muslim world came to Iran such that it became the centre of Shiite learning. On the other hand, many Shiite missionaries went from Iran to Moghul India and elsewhere so Iran was not totally isolated from the rest of the Islamic world.

There is no space to catalogue the religious teachers of the Safavid period or their teachings. The philosophical writings of Mir Damad (d. ca 1631) and Mulla Sadra of Shiraz (di ca 1641) have been characterized by some scholars as the bases on which the movements of Babism and then Bahatism were built, but this is a matter of much dispute. It is rather the popular theological writings of such prolific Shiite divines as Muhammad al-'Amili (d. 1622) and Muhammad Baqir-i Majlisi (d. 1700) which set the tenor of the age. Their writings seem rather dull and even turgid today, but in their time they dealt with problems troubling the common folk as well as the intellectuals. The necessity for an *imam* to lead the Muslims and the belief in the hidden *imam* were elaborated in teachings which laid the doctrinal basis for a Shiite 'church'. In the time of the later Safavids the *mujtahids* or learned men of Shiite Islam gained a strong place in Persian society, which position has been challenged only recently, primarily by the impact of the West.

It is significant to remember that Iran did not have the same history of learning as the Arab world which produced no great thinker after Ibn Khaldun at the end of the fourteenth

century. For the Sunni Muslims all that was important in thought, and especially in philosophy, had been said by the Sunni theologians, and like the dependence of medieval Western Europe on Aristotle, there was no incentive to question past masters. The story of Islamic philosophy in Iran was different than that of the Arab world and the Ottoman Empire, since various schools flourished and competed in Iran while among the Arabs and Turks one unquestioned orthodoxy in philosophic thought continued in unbroken tradition down to the present.

Scholastic philosophy or theology (*kalam*) was always taught everywhere in the Islamic world, Iran included. Another school of thought, which we might term the peripatetic (*masha'i*), declined in the Arab world after it had been attacked by the great theologian al-Ghazzali, or Algazel as he was called in Europe, early in the twelfth century. It was revived in Iran, however, a century later by Nasir al-Din Tusi, who exalted the role of reason in spiritual knowledge and in salvation. A third school, called the illuminationist or the *Ishraqi*, combining reason and intuition, was founded by a thinker called Suhrawardi and had many adherents in Iran. Finally, the purely mystical, or Sufi philosophy, based on gnosis (*irfan*) always was popular among the Persians. These four schools of thought continued to flourish in Iran in Safavid times when Mulla Sadra tried to synthesize all of them into a unified philosophy. So creative philosophical thought continued to be manifest in Iran long after it seemingly had ceased elsewhere in the Islamic world.

Thus Iran has had a continuous and developing philosophical tradition from at least the tenth century of our era which cannot be matched by the Arabs or Turks. How much this has influenced the common people is difficult to say, but probably more than generally has been realized in the West, for the Persians greatly respect knowledge and the search for it. The Safavid period of Iran's history is not only one of artistic splendour but also of religious and philosophical

efforts, including the dispatch of students to Europe, Tabriz became the most progressive city in Iran and Azeris became especially prominent in Iran's foreign service. Unfortunately the prince died before Fath 'Ali Shah. Also the beginning of the reign of the youthful Nasr al-Din Shah promised to be a period of reform led by the Prime Minister Mirza Taqi Khan, who imitated the Tanzimat reforms of Ottoman Turkey. When Mirza Taqi began to reduce the pensions of the many Qajar princes and to attack the sale of posts and bribery he trod on many toes. If the shah had supported him and turned a deaf ear to his adversaries, much might have been accomplished, but the Prime Minister was removed from office and put to death in 1852.

The interaction of internal discontent with growing foreign influences produced a series of social-religious movements in Iran, the most important of which was that of the Babis. Much has been written about the Babis and their successors the Bahais and we shall but briefly review their history here. 'Ali Muhammad, called the Bab or 'Gate', was born in Shiraz in 1819 of a merchant family. He journeyed to Nejed in Mesopotamia where the young man met a *sayyid* (descendant of the prophet) called Kazem Reshti, head of the Shaykhi sect which believed in the immanent return of the messiah, the hidden, twelfth *imam*. After the death of Kazem in 1843 'Ali Muhammad proclaimed himself the Bab or forerunner of the messiah or *mahdi*, but in 1847 he declared himself the *mahdi* and wrote a book the *Bayan* which became a holy book for his disciples. The Bab, as he is usually called, taught that he had come with a new message for the present age replacing Muhammad and the Qur'an which had replaced Jesus and the Evangiles, which had replaced Moses and the Pentateuch. A new order of society, a new prophet and new laws had now become necessary because the previous system had decayed and had become corrupted. His teachings were in a good Shiite tradition plus new ideas of tax revision, social reform, and the

like, in which he was accused of exhibiting old Mazdakite, or other heretical tendencies.

In 1849 and 1850 Babi uprisings occurred in several parts of the country but they were cruelly suppressed, and in July 1850 the Bab himself was executed in Tabriz. New Babi revolts were put down and an unsuccessful attempt on the shah's life brought bloody reprisals. Many Babis fled to the Ottoman Empire and Russia. A split in their ranks occurred and the majority followed the leadership of one Mirza Husain 'Ali, called Baha'ullah. He led the group, now called Bahais, on a new path, emphasizing liberal ideas and thought, primarily of Western Europe, over the Shiite religious elements, such that Bahaism became a universal, cosmopolitan religion with a centre at Haifa, Palestine and with adherents all over the world as well as in Iran. Bahaism still has followers in Iran and it is a potent force for change and reform. The Iranian government has been harsh on the Bahais, usually under the instigation of the orthodox Shiite religious leaders.

Soviet scholars have characterized the Babi movement as a genuine peasant mass movement, but Bahaism becomes for them a bourgeoisie, capitalist sect with certain liberal but antiquated religious ideas. Such a simple view is not only scholarly unsound but probably itself is now antiquated in the Soviet Union.

The second half of the nineteenth century in Iran is the story of further decline, of English-Russian rivalry, and of the expansion of European commercial interests in the country. We have already seen how the political position of Iran changed from an independent power to a buffer state. The commercial interests of the foreigners changed from mere trade in textiles and luxury objects to exploitation of natural resources and a mass market for the factories of Europe. This new expansion has been termed economic imperialism and it became of great importance after the discovery of oil by a British company in southern Iran in 1908. Before turning to British-Russian rivalry in the early twentieth century with the

rise of nationalism and the Constitutional movement, let us briefly examine the process of contact between the Persians and Europeans which was continuing throughout the nineteenth century.

The Catholic missionaries and schools in Iran were joined by Protestants in the early half of the century. American Presbyterians opened a centre in Urmia, now called Rezaiyeh, in 1834. They later opened schools and hospitals in northern Iran in Resht, Tehran and Mashhad. The Church of England, in agreement with the Presbyterians, concentrated in southern Iran. The influence of these Western charitable institutions in the country was undoubtedly significant since the common folk came in direct contact with foreigners and new ideas. We have noted that the Russians set the pattern for other countries in obtaining special privileges and extraterritorial rights in Iran. In 1856 the United States received the same extraterritorial capitulatory rights in Iran as Great Britain, France and Russia. In 1882 an American Legation was opened in Tehran which had become the capital of Iran under the Qajars. There was little work for the diplomats, however, since American-Persian trade was small and the missionaries generally took care of themselves.

The Persians were not inactive in seeking contacts with the West. A few Persian students were sent to Europe during the reign of Fath 'Ali Shah, and in 1851 the first college on Western lines was founded in Tehran and throughout the century influences from the outside steadily increased. Intellectual ideas, of course, only reached the upper class Persians, although material evidence of the West penetrated to the common folk as well. The Anglican and Presbyterian missionaries worked primarily among the Christian Assyrians and Armenians and brought Western ideas to them, but the latter were not in sufficient numbers in Iran to wield much influence. The minorities, however, did not form a Levantine class as in the Ottoman Empire where the Turks were shielded from contact with Europeans. The religious minorities in Iran,

Assyrians, Armenians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and Bahais took advantage of the benefits of Westernization more than the Muslim majority. Not that Western influence was always beneficial and never baneful. The foreign exploitation of Iran, however, was felt by the court and aristocracy with little reaction among the masses until the turn of the century.

There is no really detailed study yet of the background of the Persian revolution and the Constitutional movement of 1906-1909, but forces were at work which prepared the way for the upheaval. The examples of Arabi Pasha and his literary supporters in Egypt, the work of Jamal al-Din Afghani and the modernist movements in India and in the Ottoman Empire cannot have failed to find some echoes in Iran, although it must be admitted the direct evidence is slight. The interesting features of Iran's revolution are the participation in it of both Westernized intellectuals and conservative traditionalists such as religious leaders and merchants. A foretaste of the power of the clergy-led masses was the reaction of the Persians against a tobacco monopoly which had been given by the shah to a British concern in 1891. The boycott against tobacco was so effective that the monopoly was cancelled. Nonetheless much of Iran's economy by 1906 was run by foreigners.

A British subject, the banker Baron de Reuter in 1872 had obtained an impressive concession from the shah to exploit minerals and oil, construct railways, and a host of other monopolies. It too had to be cancelled, mostly because of Russian pressure, but de Reuter instead received the right to create a bank and in 1889 he set up the Imperial Bank of Persia. Russia had not been idle, and a Russian gained fishing rights in the Caspian in 1888, while the best military force in the country was the Persian Cossack Brigade with Russian officers, created in 1879. Nasr al-Din Shah made two trips to Europe and his diaries are full of interesting observations about his experiences but the voyages cost great sums of money so he, which meant his country, was in debt, hence he allowed the foreign concessions to repay those debts.

The story of the loans of Nasr al-Din and of his son Muzaffar al-Din is one of increasing indebtedness to British or Russian banks until it seemed as though the nation would go bankrupt and into the receivership of the two foreign countries.

People who deplore present conditions in Iran may forget that the country has been in a state of crisis or shock for many of the sixty odd years since the beginning of the century. Present disorder, corruption and weak government are nothing like pre-Reza Shah days. Indeed it is difficult to imagine how the despotic, inefficient court and bureaucracy of the Qajars really functioned. The rise of nationalism and the Constitutionalist movement only served to confuse still further the decrepit medieval government of Muzaffar al-Din Shah.

The activity of Persians outside of Iran, some of them in exile, was extensive in pre-Constitution days. Persian newspapers or journals were published in Calcutta, Cairo, Istanbul, Paris and elsewhere attacking the tyranny of the shah and advocating reforms of the government, although few presented specific plans for a parliament, code of laws, or the like. Perhaps the most important centre of such activity was Transcaucasia for several reasons. First, Russian Azerbaijan was predominantly Shiite like Persian Azerbaijan and many pilgrims from the north visited the Shiite shrines in Iran where contacts with the local population were made. Second, the Azeris were influenced by writings in Turkish and developments in the Ottoman Empire. Finally, the Azeris in both Iran and in the Tsarist empire were more Westernized than their co-religionists. The oil fields of Baku brought Russification more to the Azeris than to other Caucasian Muslims while the position of the Azeris in Iran in respect to modern ideas is well known. Iranian culture was very strong among Caucasian Muslims. So intellectuals in Iran were not unaware of the agitation in writings for change and reform. Yet the Constitution came into existence almost accidentally and unexpectedly, since those who precipitated the crisis which led to the granting

of a Constitution by the shah were not the Westernized intellectuals but rather merchants and religious leaders.

The immediate cause of the Constitutional uprising was a protest of some merchants and *mullahs* against the Prime Minister, who was held responsible for the corruption in government and also for the expensive trips of the shah to Europe. They took refuge or *bast*, as the old Persian custom was called, in a mosque in Tehran, and later they moved to a shrine south of the city. The shah promised to dismiss his hated Prime Minister and to institute reforms but as soon as the agitators had dispersed he reneged on his promises and the Prime Minister started on a policy of repression of the discontented merchants and *mullahs*. The result was the famous *bast* in the British Legation compound by about ten thousand Persians. The shah who was sick and dying consented to establish a parliament and a Constitution, and both came into existence before he died in January 1907.

His son Muhammad 'Ali Shah was a despot determined to suppress the Constitution. Ranks were drawn for a struggle between the followers of the shah and supporters of the Constitution, when the infamous, in Persian eyes, Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 was announced. In effect it divided the country into two spheres of influence, the Russian in the north and over much of Iran and the British south of Isfahan and in the southeastern part of the country. This treaty shocked many of the Constitutionalists who had hoped for British support against the shah and his Russian advisers. The rapprochement between the Russians and the British, however, might have been foreseen, especially after the disastrous defeat of the Tsar's troops by the Japanese in 1905 and the Russian revolution of the same year. The defeat of Russia by the Japanese had a great propaganda effect on the Orient since for the first time a major European power had been defeated by an Oriental state. Furthermore the growing strength of Germany was another factor which brought the Russians and the British together.

It is interesting that the Persian revolution occurred when the country was in effect under a dual foreign protectorate. In June 1908 the new shah ordered the Persian Cossack brigade to bombard the Parliament building. The reaction of the Constitutionalists was quick and perhaps unexpected by the shah. Forces were formed at Tabriz, Resht and Isfahan and the revolution began. There was scattered fighting and Russian troops moved into Tabriz to restore order. The Constitutionalists, however, managed to enter Tehran in July 1909 and depose the shah who took refuge in the Russian Legation. Muhammad 'Ali fled to Russia and the parliament or *majlis* named his eleven year old son Ahmad ruler of Iran.

Fighting was not over since a breakdown in local government had occurred all over the country. The victors in the civil war, as it might be called, quarrelled among themselves dividing into extremist and liberal groups. The chaos in the country induced the ex-shah Muhammad 'Ali to try his luck again; so in 1911 he landed on the south Caspian coast and prepared an expedition against Tehran. His forces were defeated and British diplomatic pressure caused his withdrawal to Russia and permanent exile.

At this time an interesting episode happened when an American economic expert named Morgan Shuster was appointed in 1911 to reorganize the finances of the country. Shuster tried in many ways to increase revenue, to end abuses and to put order into the tax system, but he clashed with the Russians when he tried to apply pressure to rich Persian protégés of Russia. The Tsarist government presented an ultimatum to the Persian government which was forced to dismiss Shuster. The latter returned to America and wrote a book called *The Strangling of Persia*, which translated into Persian became a best seller in the country. Shuster while capable and perhaps idealistic did not understand some of the reasons for the sorry plight of Iran or the necessity for acute diplomatic activity before any course of action was determined.

The Russians became enemies number one in the minds of

the Persians when they bombarded the Shiite shrine at Mashhad ostensibly to make a demonstration in order to protect the lives of Russian nationals in the city. With the breakdown of central government authority in the provinces where bandits proliferated, it seemed to many Persians that Russia would have to assume complete control of the government if Iran was to survive as an entity. Such was the unhappy situation at the outbreak of World War I.

The declaration of war in Europe brought hope to the Persians that their enemies would be defeated by the Central Powers, and one need not wonder why the Germans were popular and received support in Iran. The land of Iran was a theatre of war and Turks fought Russians while German agents roused the Qashqais and other tribesmen against the British, who were vitally concerned to protect their oil installations. On several occasions the Persian government was ready to join the conflict against the Allies but the fortunes of war prevented a hasty decision, such that Iran remained neutral throughout, though her sympathies could not be disguised.

The Russian Revolution and the subsequent withdrawal of Russian troops from Iran left a vacuum into which the British in a desultory manner marched. By the end of the war the British were masters of the country but they did not have the forces or a determined policy to really rule Iran. Nonetheless in 1919 a treaty was proposed which would have placed Iran under British control almost as a protectorate. The Persian people protested in mass demonstrations so the treaty was never ratified by the *majlis*. Bolshevik troops occupied Gilan and it seemed as though the revolution of the proletariat might spill over into Iran. The new Soviet state, however, was too much occupied with internal affairs to concern itself with a revolution in Iran, so the troops were evacuated after the signing of the famous Irano-Soviet treaty of 1921 which for decades remained the basis of relations between the two countries. In that treaty the Soviet Union

agreed to end all Persian debts and special Russian privileges in Iran, but the Soviets reserved the right to move troops into the country if they felt threatened by the activities of a foreign power on the soil of Iran. This provided the background for the Soviet invasion of 1941.

Before we turn to Reza Shah we may ask what was the highpoint of the old régime, of Qajar rule in Persian history. The Persian revolution was, in a certain sense, even more significant than the Young Turk revolution in the Ottoman Empire with which it has been compared. In my opinion the Constitution of Iran became the new charisma or 'mystique' for the Persian people in the twentieth century. Just as the mere facts of history do not alone make that history so the Constitution in itself is not as significant as the symbolic meaning, the spiritual value engendered by the fact. The Constitution has become more powerful, for many Persians, than the person or the institution of the shah. It has replaced Muhammad or Shah 'Abbas as the new centre or the new symbol of loyalty, and it has provided a rallying point for a modern '*asabiyya*' of the Persians. It now occupies the same, but perhaps even more important position in the minds of many Persians than the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution do in the minds of Americans, and certainly it means far more for the Persians than the Magna Charta does for the English. For this reason alone it would be well to mention several distinctive features of the Iranian Constitution.

The first article of the Constitution states that the official religion of Iran is the orthodox, twelver Shiite sect of Islam, while the second provides for a check on all legislation by religious leaders who will determine whether any decree or law is contrary to Islamic principles. It is an anomaly that the Constitution which was to end despotic government by introducing liberal ideas, in regard to appointment to high offices more or less insured the opposite. In the days of absolutism, the shah might elevate an Armenian or a Georgian to the highest office in the land, but after the *majlis* came into

existence the highest offices in actuality were not open to the ethnic or religious minorities. Unfortunately such was the case with many nascent nationalisms all over the world.

The Iranian Constitution was modelled after the Belgian Constitution and most of its articles, aside from the first two, were really advanced for the Iran of 1906. In spite of religious controls and a few restrictive articles, the Constitution was a remarkable document. If all of the articles had been strictly interpreted and obeyed, Iran would have been a land of relative equality and justice. Unfortunately the translation of fine words into actions sometimes was lacking and laws were ignored. Still the Constitution was a momentous step and a necessary first step in the direction of enlightened government and the development of freedom in Iran.

In the field of foreign relations the British-Russian rivalry dominated the Qajar scene, and even after the Agreement of 1907 the power realities were the same, Russia in Transcaucasia and Central Asia and Britain in India. The shrinking of the world in the twentieth century and the cataclysm of 1914-1918, however, changed not only the old order of politics and society but also the time-honoured rules and principles whereby alliances and power politics were ordered. Many writers about Iran start the modern era with the Constitution, just as in the Ottoman Empire the Young Turk revolution ended the power of a despotic sultan. Yet in both the fruition of those important movements were similar—Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Reza Shah Pahlavi. Both have been characterized as mere copies of Mussolini or other European dictators who came to power in the post war chaos. Influenced they probably were, but the origins of both the Turkish and the Iranian leader are best sought in the contemporary conditions and in the past of their own lands. In any case the brave new world of Iran began with Reza Shah.

CHAPTER VIII

The End of an Epoch

It was less than a week before the Soviet-Iranian Treaty was signed in the middle of February 1921 that Reza Khan, a commander of the Persian Cossack Brigade, overthrew the government by a *coup d'état*. Parliamentary government was maintained after a number of arrests had been made, and a new prime minister, Sayyid Ziya al-Din, took office, though actual power resided with Reza Khan. It is impossible to give a biography of the late shah here; perhaps the closest parallel with him would be Peter the Great. Both were impressive by their physical size and the effect they had on those who met them. Both sought to change their people and countries, by violent means if necessary. Both were successful in that Russia after Peter was quite different from what it had been before him and Iran after Reza Shah was never the same.

Reza Khan came to the throne in stages; first he was commander-in-chief of the armed forces and Minister of War. In 1923 he became prime minister and shortly afterwards Ahmad Shah Qajar left for Europe never to return. In 1926 Reza was crowned shah and began a new dynasty which he called after a pre-Islamic word, Pahlavi. What interests us most was his policy of the modernization of Iran, which brought about an upheaval in the society, economy and government of the country, a face-changing operation.

Reza Khan saw early that to bring about reforms one needed force, and so his first task was to increase and reform the army. He had to have the means to enforce his will, in the form of central governmental authority, all over Iran. In 1921

great sums of money from the national budget were allocated for military purposes, and the results of this were not slow in appearing. Reza Khan in 1922 first moved against the openly declared rebels against central authority, and he was successful in securing the allegiance of the Arabs in Khuzistan, and of tribal leaders in Kurdistan. He retook Gilan with its revolutionary government, and soon all of Iran acknowledged the central authority. Reza Khan's main objective in the army was soon achieved in that he created an officer class loyal to him personally. Some young officers were sent to Europe for further training, and foreign advisers were hired to help train the army in Iran. Only a few Swedish officers, however, were directly active in the Iranian army, for Reza Khan wanted to rid his army of all foreign political influence.

After rebels, or opponents outside of Tehran, were crushed or induced to submit, Reza Khan turned to internal opponents, but he was not strong enough to open an attack upon them until he became shah. When he became shah he became 'the shadow of God upon earth' and in this case the shadow of Allah, like Jehovah, was that of a fierce and jealous God. It may appear jaundiced or uncharitable to discuss Reza Shah's reforms under the rubric of opponents whom he had to subdue, but it is more valid to discuss them in this manner than to suppose that Reza Shah had a constructive master plan for the reform and edification of his country.

There were principally two opponents of Reza Shah, the religious leaders and the tribal chieftains. Two other groups in the pattern of power in the country, the great landowners and the merchants, were greatly affected by the new ruler and, while the two might be considered opponents, on the whole they did not really suffer a diminution in their positions. Nonetheless they too may be considered as minor opponents of the sweeping actions of Reza Shah, for they lost certain social privileges. The nobility was by this time dominated by princes of the prolific Qajar royal family. The court protocol and system of prerogatives was changed by Reza Shah, and the

honorifics by which many of the nobles were known were abolished. The bases and the instruments of Reza Shah's policy and actions were the army, the gendarmerie, and other agents of central authority. There was a certain amount of confiscation of lands, but since Reza Shah himself became the greatest landowner in Iran by acquiring most of the province of Mazanderan, the foundations of land ownership in the country were little changed.

Many Western writers have attributed the change in Reza Shah in the late thirties, his morbidity, his retreat into seclusion, and his greed, to the removal and execution of his capable Minister of Court, Timurtash, in 1933. Certainly the latter, a polished and even brilliant diplomat, was the contact man between the shah and foreigners, but his virtues have been perhaps too highly sung by the foreigners.

The growth of state monopolies of foreign trade and government control of internal commerce and industry caused much grumbling among the merchants, but in spite of the many restrictions, fortunes were made in commerce during Reza Shah's reign. Although merchants might oppose the shah, they had little power and the government usually had its way.

One of the most spectacular achievements of the régime of Reza Shah was the building of the Trans-Iranian railroad from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf. It was finally finished in 1938 after great engineering difficulties over difficult terrain. While the economic viability of the railroad was and is questionable, undoubtedly its influence on the national morale and the symbolic value of uniting certain provinces with Tehran were enormous. Branch lines planned to Mashhad and Tabriz have been completed only recently. The story of the building of the railroad by representatives of many European countries, yet financed by the Iranian government from its monopolies on sugar and tea, both very important in the national economy, would occupy a book in itself.

Along with the railroad, the new shah built roads, tore down the walls of towns and lifted the urban face of Iran. All this cost great sums and already in 1922 before he became shah, an American economic mission under A. C. Millspaugh came to Iran to reorganize the tax system. During the five years he was in Iran, Millspaugh helped to bring order to the budget and to finances and no doubt he helped greatly to increase the flow of funds to government coffers. As time went on taxes rose and the government entered the realm of production with sugar refineries and factories, matches, shoes, tobacco, glass and many other products, all under state ownership or state control. Even a state tourist agency *Irantour* was created similar to the Soviet Intourist. Private merchants suffered from many of the state monopolies or control over such items as automobile imports and carpet exports. One may say that during the later part of Reza Shah's rule corruption and graft not only increased but took new directions.

The results of the great expenditures and the oppressive taxes could be seen in an embellishment of the cities where money became plentiful, but a corresponding impoverishment of the countryside took place. The shah wanted to make his country independent of the outside world but by entering the path of industrialization he, in fact, tied his country ever more closely to the West, and the country became even more dependent on the West on the economic and industrial side, which was not what he wanted. As a result the demand for luxuries and the necessities of modern living was well on the way to bankrupt the nation.

The struggle with the most powerful and influential opponent probably has aroused more interest in writers on the Reza Shah era than almost anything else. The religious leaders were the custodians of the past and the shah believed that their power had to be broken. Previous rulers had fought with the religious leaders but always within the framework of Islam, and customary law and religious traditions had never been

seriously challenged. Reza Shah could not have subdued the clergy had he not had the real support of the army officers and many intellectuals in his attack on the power and influence of religion in Iran. The shah had ostensibly followed the wishes of the Shiite divines in becoming shah instead of establishing a republic on the model of the Turkey of Ataturk, but it was soon clear that Reza Shah would disregard the clergy and run rough-shod over them if they got in his way. His policy of glorification of Iran's pre-Islamic past, substitution of older Persian words for Arabic in the Persian language, and the extolling of the virtues of the Zoroastrians over against the Muslims, was the cultural background of his campaign against Shiite Islam. On the plane of law and authority Reza Shah wrought great changes.

Theoretically in the old days there were three systems of law, two of which might be joined under one heading. One was called *'urf* or *adat*, explained as common law or secular law, and which covered questions such as water rights and land disputes. Since *'urf* also concerned the state, one would have expected a mechanism, such as secular courts, to handle cases in non-religious questions. In Iran under the Qajars, however, there was no code or regular administration for *'urf*. The second system the *shari'ah*, as a matter of fact, took over much of the domains which properly should have been reserved to *'urf*. The *shari'ah* courts were religious courts based on the Qur'an and interpreted by *mujtahids*. The third system, perhaps to be subsumed under *'urf*, was that of *qanun*, or primarily edicts of the shah, usually relating to foreign affairs, taxes, public security, etc.

Although several civil courts were created by the Constitution, such as the Criminal Court and the Court of Appeals, there were no codes or procedures and the *shari'ah* in fact dominated these courts. Studies had been made and a temporary civil code and a commercial code had been promulgated before Reza Shah. His minister of justice, an exceptionally able jurist called Davar, was able to present a civil code,

based mainly on the French civil code, to the *majlis* which approved it in 1928. The foreign capitulations were abolished, and a whole host of new laws relating to the judiciary followed in rapid succession. A law of 1932 required legal transactions to be registered in secular courts, and this more than anything struck at the clergy who had been the custodians of records, from which they had derived much revenue and authority. By a law of December 27, 1936 a further blow was struck at the clergy by requiring all judges to hold a law degree from a secular university or law faculty. Many problems rose from this requirement, but the hold of the religious leaders over the judiciary was broken and by 1940 the *shari'ah* courts had become mere advisory bodies.

Of course some features of *shari'ah* law, especially in personal matters, such as marriages and divorce, were not abrogated but the religious features of them were played down when they were revised. The result is that the present legal structure of Iran is a mixture of modern Western law and traditional Islamic law, while some contradictions or conflicts between the two have been ignored rather than solved. After the abdication of Reza Shah the religious leaders began to recoup influence lost during his reign. Although the real battle with the clergy was fought and won by Reza Shah in the legal domain of the reforms, in the area of religiously sanctioned popular practices changes were less spectacular.

There was promulgated a succession of laws which upset the old order. Licenses were required for the wearing of religious costumes; the popular passion plays during the month of *Muharram* were forbidden; popular dervishes were driven out of towns; religious schools were replaced by secular schools; the veil was removed from women; non-Muslim foreigners were allowed inside mosques, and a new Pahlavi cap was introduced for men as a sign of Westernization. Such social reforms or innovations penetrated to the people and were a manifest example of the power of the shah and his reform government over the forces of tradition led by the

mullahs. There was opposition and riots had to be suppressed by the troops. Reza Shah himself on one occasion entered the shrine at Qum without removing his boots and personally flogged the *mujtahid* who had dared to criticize the queen for removing her veil. The shah was not averse to using machine guns to restore order to mobs which protested his secular reforms. By the end of the reign of Reza Shah the religious leaders seemed to have been utterly subdued.

Another strong enemy of the shah was the tribe. The tribal leaders never paid more than nominal allegiance to the central government and in the days before the automobile, the aeroplane with a bomb, and the machine gun, they were safe from reprisals in their mountain fastnesses. The tribes had maintained a special pattern of life for centuries moving to the mountains in the summer and migrating to the warm plains in the winter. Such a nomadic life was necessary for the very existence of the tribes since their livelihood, based on sheep, goats and cattle, depended on the availability of forage. Hence any interruption of the seasonal migration spelled disaster for the tribes. Furthermore, large areas of Iran are not suitable for agriculture but only for grazing.

To Reza Shah the tribes were a threat to his authority and to internal security. He determined to force them to settle down and give up their nomadic life. Tribal chiefs were imprisoned, or put to death, and military force was used to subdue the tribes. There were frequent uprisings; for example, the Qashqais revolted in 1929 and again in 1937 but on both occasions were suppressed. The policy of liquidation of the tribes, as the Soviets would say, was only partially successful, for after 1941 the tribes regained much of their lost power.

All groups, landlords, merchants, religious leaders and tribes, were cowed by Reza Shah but they were not by any means destroyed. In one field, however, Reza Shah made incomparable strides, in the field of education of the young. It was apparent to the followers of the shah that unless they educated the children as they thought fit, none of the reforms

of the government would ultimately succeed. France provided the model in curricula and in text books, and by the end of the reign of Reza Shah the old *maktabs* or traditional Islamic schools were gone and new modern schools had almost entirely replaced them. Great problems in lack of trained teachers and in equipment made the entire period really one of experimentation in the field of education. The changes from the old system of rote learning of the Qur'an, of Arabic and Classical subjects were almost miraculous. Progressive schools of religious minorities such as the Armenians and Bahais, as well as foreign schools, were brought more and more under the direction of the Ministry of Education. The Zoroastrians, however, for the first time since the Arab conquest of Iran, were favoured because of their relation to the past. The growing nationalism, which was particularly fostered by the officials of the Education Ministry, finally led to the closing of the foreign missionary schools in 1940 and their transformation into public state schools.

In 1935 the corner stone of a new university uniting various existing colleges was laid in Tehran by Reza Shah. Here too French influence was predominant, but the political importance of the student body especially in the ability to organize riots was not felt until after Reza Shah. A very important avenue of Western influence among the educated people of Iran were the Persian students who were educated in Europe or the United States amounting to several thousands every year. Great prestige accrued to the student who had been educated abroad but one problem was almost insuperable, not only in Iran but all over the Orient. This was the reluctance, if not inability, of the educated person to use his hands, for in his own eyes he was an intellectual and could not demean himself by any physical labour. The government of Reza Shah realized that engineers and doctors were needed above all else, yet the faculty of law became the most popular of the faculties since it promised government employment of some kind after graduation and no hand labour. Adult

education at nights, the physical education programmes, and many other projects were initiated under the Reza Shah régime. Throughout all of the reforms or development the leading motif was nationalism and glorification of the past.

The nationalism of the Persians frequently led to xenophobia and a feeling of inferiority face to face with foreigners. Of course, similar sentiments were found in various countries after World War I and they were characteristic of new nationalisms. In the foreign field Iranian nationalism promoted the desire to be independent of any reliance on a foreign power. We have mentioned the end of the capitulatory rights of foreigners in Iran, but the Persian government had to employ foreign advisers, and trade was carried on with Soviet Russia, Britain and at the end of Reza Shah's reign ever more with Germany. Russia and Iran jointly operated the fisheries off the Caspian shores of Iran, especially the caviar industry, while the British operated the oil fields and the refinery at Abadan. Otherwise foreign controlled enterprises in the country were few and unimportant, in marked contrast to Qajar times. In 1933 the shah was successful in obtaining more revenue from the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, but even the increased royalties failed to satisfy the need for more and more funds to continue the modernization of the country. Even with Iran's growing strength Reza Shah did not dare to nationalize the oil industry since Britain would not have tolerated it in those days.

Traditionally in Iran land was the basis of wealth, and by the time of the accession of Reza Shah landholding, water rights and rentals were in a somewhat chaotic state since no survey and registration of land had been done. A beginning was made to register all the land of the country but even today there are large tracts in Baluchistan, the deserts, Kurdistan and elsewhere which are unregistered. Reza Shah's reforms were all from the top down and consequently the peasants were farthest removed from any benefits of the new order. The problem of local authority was pressing, so a law of

December 1935 provided that every village *kadkhuda* or headman was to be invested with a legal, governmental responsibility, although he was not to be elected but to be chosen by the greatest landlord, or, in the case of state lands, to be appointed by the government, which usually meant the local tax and finance office. The *kadkhuda* was not responsible to the people but to the landlord, or the largest property owner if a village had several landlords, and more and more to the government as well. The *kadkhuda* was in charge of affairs relating to agriculture, and he also decided minor disputes, and was in general the liaison man between the owner with the state and the peasants. Established authority was clearly not on the side of the peasant.

Reforms and improvements in agriculture were not very spectacular, and again the landlords, on the whole, profited rather than the peasant, and the greatest landholder of all, the shah, profited the most. He even forbade the cultivation of certain crops such as rice in parts of the country other than Mazanderan where his own estates were. The building of underground tunnels for irrigation, called *qanats*, was encouraged and new seeds and new methods of cultivation were introduced in the country. Again the peasant himself reaped little benefit from any modernization of agriculture. Although there are no statistics, it would seem that large landed estates prospered and grew under Reza Shah while the small owner holdings decreased. Land conditions varied considerably from province to province; for example in Kirman province small land ownership was virtually non-existent since the cost of irrigation by long *qanats* was beyond the means of any village or group of peasants. Usually the independent peasant was in debt and his holding was rarely able to support his family.

One large body of land holding should have suffered diminution under Reza Shah, the *waqf* or charitable land. The medieval Islamic institution of the endowment (plural *auqaf*), was a kind of foundation, such as has so much proliferated among the wealthy families of modern America.

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